

## **Onitsha Listeners' Perception of Radio Influence on Sports Development in Anambra State**

By

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### **Abstract**

Radio sports programmes provide opportunity to disseminate information on how sports sector is developing. This study investigated influence of radio sports programmes on sports development in Anambra state from the perception of radio listeners in Anambra State, especially in Onitsha. The objectives that guided the study are: to ascertain the level of exposure to sports programmes on radio by listeners in Onitsha; to find out whether listeners in Onitsha perceive radio sports programmes on radio as sports development tools in Anambra State; to identify whether exposure to radio sports programmes influences respondents' attitude towards sports development in Anambra State; and to ascertain whether exposure to sports development programmes on radio influences listeners' attendance to sports events in Anambra State. Survey research method was used for the study. The multi-stage sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used in studying 384 respondents in Onitsha. Findings of the study revealed that: sports listeners in Onitsha were exposed to sports programmes on radio; sports listeners in Onitsha see sports programmes on radio as viable tools for sports development; exposure to sports programmes on radio influenced attitude of sports listeners in Onitsha towards sports positively; and that exposure to sports programmes on radio influenced attendance to sports events by residents of Onitsha. The researcher recommended, among others, that presenters of radio sports programmes should improve on their skills regularly through self-development courses and seminars to constantly update their presentation skills; this is based on the finding that presentation skills are essential in the use of radio sports programmes as sports development tools.

*Keywords:* radio, sports, sports development, influence, listeners, sports programmes

### **Background to the Study**

Mass media play crucial role in creating development awareness through transferring information to the audience and exchanging thoughts. Through agenda-setting function, the media condition society's vision and understanding of sports, and provide a

narrative that exerts a didactic influence on the concept of sport and physical education (Marín-Motín, 2008; Puertas-Moleroa, Marfil-Carmona, Zurita-Ortega & Gonzalez-Valero, 2019). They play an effective, instructive and leading role in development, awakening public consciousness and raising public awareness by spreading novel ideas through information dissemination. This makes it possible for people to understand trend of events in their surroundings and premise decision making regarding personal and social issues on clearer and more updated information (Kumari, 2019). This also helps individuals get familiar with their social responsibilities, especially for development. Furthermore, media messages are developed according to criteria of topicality, objectivity and simplicity, which aim to produce a message with the widest reach possible (Sherwood & Nicholson, 2017). In this sense, what is determined as “newsworthy” content in sport is therefore governed by these criteria.

Sports is a major aspect of national life across the globe. This is underscored by the involvement of every country in sports, as different countries struggle to dominate others in different sporting activities (Ibagere, 2015). Specific countries are known as leading brands in certain games. For instance, Brazil is well known in football, the United States of America dominates in athletics; China and Japan are leaders in table tennis, just as India, Sri Lanka and South Africa are well known in cricket (Ibagere, 2015). Today, every country strives to be represented at major sporting events such as the Olympic and football world cup tournament. Sports, therefore, could be described as among the most important aspects of global interaction, just like politics.

Sports reporting provides platform to disseminate information on how sports sector is developing, and by so doing, the media play a major role in transferring knowledge, skills, attitudes and information (Tavakolli, Najafi, & Nobakht, 2013). The necessity of knowing mass media roles in distributing sports news and also need for studying to find results in line with achieving sports development has provided need for research in this regard. Since no comprehensive research has been done to investigate how radio coverage of sports programmes impact on sports participation and development in Anambra State, this study therefore aims at filling this gap in knowledge. This is also in consideration of the importance of media role in sports development and in guiding public opinion on sports organization in any country.

This study therefore investigated whether exposure to sports programmes on radio has led to development of sports in Anambra State.

### **Statement of Problem**

Sports development involves improvement of facilities, creation of awareness, encouragement of participation, formulation of policies that should create conducive atmosphere needed for sports to thrive in the society and so on. Effective sports development therefore requires variables like sports policy, sports personnel, sports funding, sports programme, sports facilities and sponsorship. The extent to which these variables are met shall no doubt affect the effectiveness of any sports development (Yazid, 2014). Up till 2022, Nigeria's performance at international sports arena has continued to dwindle, with national teams hardly winning laurels at global tournaments.

One of the components of development is attitude change. Sports in Nigeria is on a downward slide when viewed from the angle of interest shown by Nigerians. For instance, an average football fan in Nigeria knows the names of all players in popular football leagues in Europe but hardly knows the names of players in Nigerian league. Basketball fans prefer to watch the NBA league in the US to Nigerian basket ball league. Dwindling interest in sports in Nigeria is a factor that affects the development of this sector.

Sports in Anambra State is also not enjoying the best of times and this could be felt based on the weak performance of the State contingent to national sports festival 2021 and other sports competitions in the country. States like Rivers, Edo and Lagos states are always putting up very impressive performance in sports but Anambra State does not. Whether this is because of lack of sponsorship of sports events in the state or lack of interest of philanthropists in sports is not yet established. This study is aimed at finding out whether sports programmes on radio encourage interest in sports which can lead to development of sports in Anambra State.

Since the mass media play crucial roles in development communication, it is essential to investigate how radio influenced sports development in Anambra State, particularly from the perception of listeners. This study also contributes to knowledge in the area of radio use in achieving sports development in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To ascertain the level of exposure to sports programmes on radio by listeners in Anambra State.
2. To find out whether listeners perceive radio sports programmes on radio as sports development tools in Anambra State.
3. To identify whether exposure to radio programmes influences respondents' attitude towards sports development in Anambra State.
4. To ascertain whether exposure to sports development programmes on radio influences listeners' attendance to sports events in Anambra State.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on the Agenda Setting theory. This theory provides that there is a relationship between the level of importance ascribed to issues in the media and the priorities of the public (Weaver, McCombs & Shaw, 2004). Researchers are therefore faced with question of how agenda-setting influences the importance subsequently attached to the images and events presented by the media. Shaw and McCombs (1972) observed that "Agenda setting refers to the ability that the media have to not only reflect reality but also determine reality". The media determine reality by how much attention they pay to any particular issue. For instance, if the news media "cover" violent crime extensively, there is a tendency that the public and policy makers will respond accordingly with fears of being victims (McCombs and Shaw, 1977).

Agenda-setting, according to Ricke (2010), is a function which mass media play in establishing important issues and images to which the public reacts. The study explains that agenda-setting "is a process by which issue proponents work to gain the focus of media professionals, the public and public policy makers". Studies in communication make available evidence that the news media are the primary agenda-setting agents (Gonzalez, 2013).

An event that is reported by the mass media can set the agenda for how the public reacts as measured in public opinion polls and how policy makers will respond through legislation. In relation to this present study, it becomes clear that the content of sports

programmes on radio could foster sports development in Anambra State.

## **The Review**

### **The Concept of Sports Development**

In modern times, the attainment of world class status in sports is a strong reflection of development objective of a country (Mohammed, 2017). Development as a concept, according to Amuchie (1992), refers to stages in growth that lead to advancement, increase in size, to evolve and to unfold. It denotes a state of coming into being and evolving into maturity with visible positive changes.

According to Sam (2016), the rise of sports development is closely linked to contemporary government investment. "By 'government', we should think not only of central or federal institutions, but also of State (or provincial), regional, local and municipal level agencies" p. 29). Together with government, there are national sport organizations (NSOs) and other not-for-profits that also employ the sport development officers, parks and recreation directors, and community programmers, ultimately tasked with increasing participation, coordinating efforts and improving programme quality (Sam, 2016). Because of sport development's 'publicness', i.e., the extent to which it is influenced by political authority (Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994), it also helps to translate policies into programmes for citizens. In this respect, the realities of development work in practice will often differ from their idealized policy intentions.

Houlihan and White (2002) while describing the depth of sport development as a concept, asked the question: should sport development be for sport's sake or aimed at addressing broader societal problems such as health, social inclusion and community regeneration? As their analysis demonstrates, there can be contending conceptualizations of sports development, for instance, between development to generate a core of elite athletes and development aimed at inner-city youth in either school or community settings. Such 'legitimations' matter a great deal in the shape of and direction of policies and programmes (Sam, 2016).

Over the past decade, the field of sport-for-development (SFD) has received significant attention from non-governmental organizations, government agencies, sport practitioners, and sport

academics around the world (Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2015). Sport-for-development has been defined as “the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialization of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution” (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011, p. 311). The popularity of SFD stems from its ability to capture or “hook” a large number of people—particularly those interested in sport and physical activity—and use the momentum in and around sport as a strategic vehicle to communicate, implement, and achieve non-sport development goals (Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2015).

Meanwhile, in development, communication works as a two way process where messages flow both ways. Communication also refers to that use of different forms of media, such as print, electronic media (radio, television), new media etc. These media are used as an empowerment tool, i.e. it is used as a tool to facilitate and encourage the participation of people in developmental activities. Different mass media are used to effectively communicate knowledge and information to people for developmental purpose (Choudhury, 2011).

No development strategy can achieve its objectives unless it views development as a comprehensive societal process that covers all aspects of life and involves all major social, cultural, economic, and political actors in society. Hence, development in sports is centered in social development.

### **The Media, Sports Information and Impact on Sports Development**

The media, through sports information dissemination, cause changes that develop sporting activities in various ways. From sports regulation, planning, organization, fan reaction and emotions, the media play crucial roles in activating sports development process in the society. Given the new demands in the digital age, match calendars are now adapted bearing in mind the optimal dates and time to reach the largest audience and ensure that main events from different sports do not overlap in order to meet demands (Devlin & Brown, 2017). This has led to changes at the cultural level, culminating in a magnification of the repercussions experienced by athletes in the face of both victory and defeat. These types of events draw in the audience and enable them to

experience the feeling of being members of a group and to identify with 'the colors of flag' (Birkner & Nölleke, 2016; Kim, Magnusen & Andrew, 2017).

Sports information also exerts influence on the regulation of sports and in the decision making of referees. Furthermore, media content can be indirectly persuasive, for instance, through the use of the iconography found in different stadiums, which includes a high number of advertising posters in addition to the continuous provision of attention to all the details and animations likely to satisfy spectators (Yanping, 2015; Cummins & Gong, 2017).

Persuasion not only describes the attraction to consume various sporting events but is also a force that influences society at both behavioral and sentimental levels. As stated by Francisco *et al.* (2013) and Stirling *et al.* (2012), viewers demand that the spectacle fulfills certain parameters of physical appearance. This could cause some athletes to develop eating disorders, particularly in sports such as gymnastics or athletics, where athletes feel pressured to continue lowering their weight in response to cultural standards set by the society in which they perform (Abbots & Attala, 2017; Mudrick, Miller & Atkin, 2017).

Sports has provided the media with enormous, predictable audiences that are attractive to advertisers both in the United States and around the world (Kumari, 2019). The revenue from sports coverage has been a major source of income for various media, but particularly for newspaper, television, and specialty magazines (Woods, 2006). Newspapers have thrived on comprehensive sports sections for more than a century. For many readers, reading the sports pages is the first priority and may be the primary reason for purchasing the paper. Even though they watch the sport contests in person or on television, most fans love to read the accounts in the next day's paper, evaluate the opinions of the sports writers and compare them to their own, and search for inside information that they might not otherwise have access to (Nazemi & Khoshemehr, 2012).

Many Nigerian media houses devote time and space to sports and this helps in increasing audience base and attracting advertisers. Same happens in other parts of the world. Kumari (2019) observes that most major newspapers in North America devote more space to sport than any other topic, including business, politics, and world news. They have found that formula to be popular with readers and

therefore attractive to advertisers. Advertisers for products that are targeted to that demographic have seized the opportunity to reach their potential customers through appearing in sports sections. Magazines that cover sport have responded to growing interest in specific sports. Most general news magazines rarely cover sport unless there is a major human interest story involved. Magazines lend themselves to stories that examine trends in sport or the social issues listed previously are prime fodder for monthlies (Woods, 2006; Kumari, 2019).

The social media are also very essential in sports development. The twenty-first century is witnessing an explosion of internet-based messages transmitted through these media which have become a major factor in influencing various aspects of consumer behaviour including awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase intention and post-purchase evaluation (Green, 2016). Agbo (2015) observes that the sports industry has witnessed remarkable changes since the emergence of social media. The new media including 2go, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Foursquare, Google+, Blogs, live chats and Pinterest, to mention a few, have not only widened the spectrum and method of sports communication but have brought new possibilities or opportunities in their wake. Rothschild (2011) cited in Agbo (2015), in a survey observed that there has been an increase in social media use for sports communication in recent times leading to a massive decline of the traditional mass media. Rothschild noted that the decline of the traditional communication methods is traceable to the rising profile of social media especially their ability to facilitate fan interaction and commentary.

Kietzmann *et al* (2011) in their research further stated that social media are effective in communicating the sports public promptly, with sufficient amounts of information and with the ability of interaction. Davies (2012) cited in Agbo (2015), posits that social media have widely united fans across the world even overcoming the barriers of language, religion and beliefs. Davies observed that social media have increased the passion for sports, and have made the public more ardent and enthusiastic in their support for sports, clubs, or players.

### **Radio and Sports Development**

The development of radio as a communication tool has, since the 1950s, continued to see this medium splinter into many different

formats, mostly centering upon music. This has led to specialized form of radio broadcasting which offers sport-only contents. Similarly, Keith (2002, p. 90) says that “the proliferation of the All-Sports format has boosted the popularity” of non-music format radio. This underscores a growing relationship between sports and radio, which is becoming more sophisticated to compete for audience attention in today’s internet world, especially in view of the rapid development of digital television and the Internet.

After a study, Katusiime (2017) acknowledge that radio had the greatest impact on sports and its audiences. Radio plays significant role in the coverage and development of the most popular sports in the society. People of different ages find themselves tuning into the radio for sports information gratification, especially due to the ability of radio programmes to engage listeners.

Sports talk radio has a large voice in the community of sports, and the way in which they cover current social issues impacts the way sports fans view athletes as well as the way athletes view media (Witz, 2014). Sports talk radio shows give fans the opportunities to share their own creative interpretation of sporting events (Zagacki & Grano, 2005). The increase of sports radio shows in the United States has allowed for dynamic conversations to transcend sports through an open public space where the ideas and attitudes of ordinary people matter (Power, Mohamud, McRoy & Robinson, 2019). “Sports talk radio plays a central role in producing the uniformity in style of expression, of opinion, of team support” (Goldberg, 1998, p. 14).

A study concluded that sports talk radio shows are a potential platform to invoke change to gender relationships and identities, while also reinforcing some forms of traditional masculinity (Nylund, 2004). Masculinity is perceived as toughness, aggressiveness, assertiveness and competitiveness. Sports talk radio shows influence men to the extent of enabling male participants to support these gender stereotypes (Power, *et al.*, 2019). The relationship between the media and their viewers or listeners can potentially create a bias regarding the politics going on, and this study was meant to dive into whether that bias occurs either positively or negatively through the medium of sports talk radio (Power, *et al.*, 2019).

## Method of Study

The research method used in this study is the survey research method. Survey research focuses on people, the vital facts of people, their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour (Osuala 2005). The survey research method was considered very appropriate for this study given its purpose of obtaining data from respondents on the impact of radio on sports development in Anambra State. The area of this study is Onitsha, Anambra State. The study specifically focused on towns in Onitsha South Local Government Area and this decision is based on researcher's discretion and convenience. The headquarters of this LGA is Fegge while some other districts in this Local Government Area are Upper Iweka, Odoakpu, Woliwo, Awada, Ochanja and more. The study specifically focused on residents of Onitsha South LGA who are exposed to the sports programmes of the radio stations selected for the study.

The radio stations selected for the study are Radio Sapientia 95.3 FM, Onitsha (Programme: Sapientia Fan Zone); Brila 88.9 FM (Programmes: "Popular Side" and Egwu Ekere, Igbo sports programme), Blaze 91.5 FM, Oraifite (Programme: Sports Arena), OGENE 98.3 FM, AWKA (Programme: Sports Rave), Odenigbo 99.1 FM, Obosi (Programme: Sports Fiesta), City 89.7 FM, Onitsha (Programme: City Sports), and WAZOBIA FM, Onitsha (Programme: Football Republik). These radio stations were selected because they had some of the most popular sports programmes in Anambra State with huge fan base in Onitsha; they were also chosen based on researcher's discretion.

The population of this study comprises of all radio listeners in Onitsha South LGA. Since there is no record of listeners of sports programmes on radio in this area, the researcher used a total number of residents of Onitsha South LGA. According to the 2006 population census, the estimated population of Onitsha South LGA is put at 213,894 inhabitants with the area primarily populated by members of the Igbo ethnic group. This figure was projected to reflect 2022 using the formula;

$$PP = GP \times PI \times T$$

Where: GP = given population;

PI = population index/growth rate which is 2.8%;

T = Diff. between the time of the given population and the present time of current study.

Population = 213,894

PP = 213,894 x 2.8% x 16

= 213,894 x 0.0228 x 16 = 78,929

PP= 213,894 + 78,929 = 292,823

A sample size is the optimal number of sampling units/elements that should be sampled, interviewed or those who can be useful in the study (Nwodu, 2017). A sample size of 384 respondents was used. It was determined using Cozby's (2004) table of sample size determination which states that at +/-0.05 error margin, a population of over 100,000 will have a sample of 384 (see Appendix 2). Thus, the sample size for this study is 384 respondents.

The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting listeners of sports programmes of the radio stations selected for the study. This was used to identify those who were given the questionnaire to fill. This technique was used to ensure that only listeners of the select radio programmes were selected for the study. Listeners residing in the streets and districts in Onitsha South LGA were studied. This was based on researcher's discretion, convenience, and where there are likely to be people who can easily understand the study and be part of it. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents.

A structured questionnaire was used to get responses from listeners of radio sports programmes in Onitsha. This was with a view to ascertaining the demographic and psychographic variables of respondents. A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered to purposively selected residents of Onitsha, Anambra State.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

Data obtained in this study are presented and analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages. A total of 384 copies of a questionnaire were individually administered on the purposively selected respondents and retrieved by the researchers. After distribution of 384 copies of a questionnaire, a total of 372 copies were returned and found usable, representing 97% return rate. Relevant demographic details of the 372 respondents that

participated in the study were presented here. The demographic factors considered relevant for this study are age, gender, marital status and educational level of respondents.

**Table 1.1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Age (yrs)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-25	78	21
26-35	105	28
36-45	96	26
46-55	65	19
56 and above	24	7
Total	372	100
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	233	63
Female	139	37
Total	372	100
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No Formal education	29	8
Primary	43	12
Secondary	119	31
Tertiary	181	49
Total	372	100
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Single	245	66
Married	127	34
Total	372	100

Table 1.1 shows that 78 respondents (21%) were aged 18-25, 105

of them (28%) were aged 26-35, 96 of them (26%) were between 36-45 years, 65 (19%) between 46-55 years old, while 24 (7%) were 56 years and above. This shows the age range of respondents was evenly spread to accommodate different categories of people in terms of age.

The table also shows that 139 of the respondents (37%) are female while 133 (36%) are male. It further shows that 29 respondents (8%) had no formal education, 43 (12%) had primary education, 119 (31%) had secondary education, while 181 (49%) had tertiary education. In terms of marital status, 245 (66%) of respondents are single while 127 (34%) are married.

### Answers to Research Questions

Four research questions were formulated for this study. The findings are presented below.

**Research Question 1: What is the level of exposure to sports programmes on radio by listeners in Onitsha?** Table 1.2 contains data generated based on this research question.

**Table 1.2: Responses on level of exposure to radio sports programmes**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	121	32
Often	133	36
Sometimes	60	16
Rarely	38	11
Very Rarely	20	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1.3 shows 32 percent of respondents (n=121) listen to radio sports programmes very often, 36 percent (n=133) listen often, 16 percent (n=60) listen sometimes, 11 percent (n=38) listen rarely while 5 percent (n=20) listen very rarely. These findings show that most respondents listened to sports programmes on radio sometimes, often and very often, which shows a high level of exposure.

**Research Question 2: What is the listener's perception of sports**

**programmes on radio as sports development tools in Anambra State?**

Table 1.4 contains data generated based on this research question.

**Table 1.3: Responses on Perception of Sports Programmes on Radio as Sports Development Tools**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	314	84
No	52	14
Can't say	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1.4 shows that majority of the respondents, 84 percent (n=314) agreed that radio sports programmes can bring about sports development in Anambra State. Another 14 percent (n=52) disagreed while only 2 percent (n=6) could not agree or disagree to this assertion. This finding shows that respondents see sports programmes on radio as viable tools for sports development.

**Research Question 3: Does exposure to radio programmes influence respondents' attitude towards sports development in Anambra State?** Table 1.5 contains data generated based on this research question.

**Table 1.4: Responses on exposure to radio programmes influence on respondents' attitude towards sports development.**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	298	80
No	66	18
Can't say	8	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1.5 shows that 80 percent of respondents (n=298) agreed that exposure to sports programmes on radio influences respondents' attitude towards sports development in Anambra State, 18 percent (n=66) disagreed while 2 percent (n=8) indicated Can't Say. In summary, exposure to sports programmes on radio influences respondents' attitude towards sports positively.

**Research Question 4:** Does exposure to sports programmes on radio influence **attendance to sports events** in Anambra State?

**Table 1.5: Responses on exposure to sports development programmes on radio and attendance to sports events**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	298	80
No	66	18
Can't say	8	2
Total	372	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1.5 shows that 80 percent of the respondents (n=298) agreed that exposure to sports programmes on radio influences attendance to sports while 2 percent (n=8) indicated "Can't Say" as they could neither say "Yes" nor "No" to the question. In summary, exposure to sports programmes on radio motivates respondents in Onitsha to attend sports events.

#### **Discussions in line with the Objectives**

**The first: To ascertain the level of exposure to sports programmes on radio by listeners in Onitsha.**

This was designed to investigate the level of exposure to sports programmes on radio by listeners in Onitsha. Data revealed that respondents were well exposed to sports programmes on radio. From the findings it could be seen that most respondents listened to sports programmes on radio sometimes, often and very often. Most of them did so often or very often, showing a high level of exposure to sports programmes on radio among respondents.

The findings of this study agree with the results of the work by Brown and Billings (2013) which found that there exists high exposure to sports programmes in the media by the audience. There are studies that have established reliance of audience members on radio for gratification of all kinds of information, including sports information (Nsude & Nwamini, 2016; Odunlami, 2016; Sarmah & Sukmaya, 2017). This further explains the high exposure to sports programmes on radio recorded in this study.

**The second: To find out whether listeners perceive radio sports programmes on radio as sports development tools in Anambra State.**

This objective of study aimed at investigating listener's perception of sports programmes on radio as sports development tools in Anambra. The findings showed that respondents see sports programmes on radio as viable tools for sports development in Anambra State. This finding is supported by numerous studies that have found sports programmes in the mass media, including radio, as crucial tools in sports and other facets of development. For instance, Kumari (2019) states that the mass media play an effective, instructive and leading role in development, awakening public consciousness and raising public awareness by spreading novel ideas through information dissemination. Similarly, various media types use message dissemination to generate a high level of interest of spectators in sports in general and research makes it possible to identify the conditions in which the modern culture and communication industry develops (Brown & Billings, 2013; Koerber & Zabara, 2017).

In yet another study, Power, Mohamud, McRoy & Robinson (2019) found that sports shows on radio had effect on social issues in the society. The researchers found that there was a relationship between individuals who follow professional athletes who feature in the media, including on social media platforms and their opinions being affected about current social issues as well. This underscores the depth of influence sports programmes in the media, including radio, have on the society.

The findings also support the agenda setting theory used in this work which provide that there is a relationship between the level of importance ascribed to issues in the media and the priorities of the public (Weaver, McCombs & Shaw, 2004). Sports programmes on radio have influence on the society by setting agenda on sports

issues. This draws attention to challenges in sports and invariably helps in achieving sports development goals.

**The third: To identify whether exposure to radio programmes influences respondents' attitude towards sports development in South-South, Nigeria.**

This objective of study investigated whether exposure to radio programmes influenced respondents' attitude towards sports development in Anambra State. The findings revealed that exposure to sports programmes on radio influenced respondents' attitude towards sports positively. Listening to sports programmes on radio encourages respondents to contribute towards sports development. It helps them to get more interested in sports and makes them understand the challenges in sports better.

This finding supports the agenda setting theory as the radio programmes set agenda on sports issues for listeners by getting them more interested in sports. Just as the agenda setting theory posits, the more attention the media gives to an issue, the more likely the public will consider that issue to be important, and the mass media (including radio) do not tell us what to think or how we should feel about a story or issue, but are giving us certain stories or issues that people should think more about (McCombs and Shaw, 1977; Folarin, 1998; Nowak 2018).

Findings of this study also received support from similar studies. Zagacki and Grano (2005) after a study found that sports talk shows on radio gave fans opportunities to share creative interpretations of events. This helped them cope with moments of perceived crisis when the team lost, and solidified their identity as tied to regional pride and the values of work, race, and masculinity. Sarmah and Sukmaya (2017) found that the immediacy, the accessibility, the simplicity of radio have the power to sustain the relevance of the medium in the among listeners.

Similarly, Yanping (2015) writes that through sports information dissemination in the media, people's ideology about sports is affected and this also brings about subtle behaviour change. It can also stimulate public interest in sports and help people have some effect on sports, and influence the formation and development of the concept of sports consciousness (Yanping, 2015; Puertas-Molero *et al.*, 2019).

**The fourth: To ascertain whether exposure to sports development programmes on radio influences listener's attendance to sports events in Anambra State.**

This objective of study investigated whether exposure to sports development programmes influenced attendance to sports events in Anambra State. The findings revealed that exposure to sports programmes on radio influenced attendance to sports events.

As Devlin and Brown (2017) noted, through the media, sports activities attract a wide audience, and this ensures that sports does not only perform its social function, but also creates valuable platform and environment for economic development. Publicity of athletes through radio sports programmes and other media also has a positive influence on spectators, and this motivates citizens to make positive behavioral changes in their lives such as engaging in more physical exercise or consuming a balanced diet, including attending sports events where athletes publicized on radio could be seen in action (Gietzen, Gollust, Linde, Neumark-Sztainer & Eisenberg, 2017). Asemah (2011) writes that radio broadcast is used to motivate and mobilise the people at the grassroots, so that they can participate actively in the development of their own society. This underscores the pertinence of radio in all facets of development including sports development.

**Summary**

This study investigated the influence of radio sports programmes on sports development in the Anambra State. The study focused on radio sports programmes listeners in Onitsha, Anambra State. The researcher chose to focus on Onitsha South LGA based on discretion and convenience.

Four objectives were formulated for the study. The survey research method was used in this work. Data revealed that sports listeners in Onitsha were exposed to sports programmes on radio, sports listeners see sports programmes on radio as viable tools for sports development, exposure to sports programmes on radio influenced sports listeners' attitude towards sports positively, and exposure to sports programmes on radio influenced attendance to sports events. These findings were analyzed showing how they supported the Agenda setting theory used in the work, including their relationship to other researches done in this area of study.

## **Conclusion**

After analysis of the findings this study concluded as follows; that: Sports listeners in Onitsha were exposed to sports programmes on radio; Sports listeners see sports programmes on radio as viable tools for sports development; Exposure to sports programmes on radio influenced sports listeners' attitude towards sports positively; exposure to sports programmes on radio influenced attendance to sports events.

## **Recommendations**

This study recommends as follows:

1. Producers of radio sports programmes should always ensure that relevant topics that discuss challenges in sports in the state are discussing irrespective of whether the station involved is government or privately owned. Though radio stations are already doing this, the point here is that the effort should be intensified with a repeat of topics which the government has not addressed. It is not enough to discuss challenges and leave them off for new ones when the problem has not been addressed.
2. Sports presenters on radio should liaise with government appointees on sports to find out the challenges in sports so as to constantly discuss them on radio. The presenters should also follow up discussed challenges by liaising with government appointees to find out whether the challenges discussed on radio have been addressed. If not yet addressed, the reasons should be identified and made known to listeners interested in sports development.
3. Radio sports producers and presenters should avoid bias in discussion of challenges in sports in the various states. Radio sports programme anchors should always balance their programme contents and ensure that their programmes engaged in constructive criticisms of observed challenges in the sports sector.
4. The researcher recommends further studies in this area of study especially on radio sports listeners in other parts of the country. Studies can also be done in future on sports audience of television, social media and other mass media platforms, regarding their exposure to sports contents of the platforms and its influence on sports development.

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